

## Debating 24+ loans at *FE Week* HQ

See pages 14 & 15



From L-R: Principal at Lewisham College, shadow minister for FE, lecturer at GCC, MD of South London Business, ME of *FE Week*, VP for FE at NUS and the BIS lead on FE loans

Monday 14 May 2012

[www.feweek.co.uk](http://www.feweek.co.uk)

### Adult learning future



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### Campus Roundup



Doncaster College student wins 9 medals and more... **Pages 12 & 13**

inside...

## Redundancies at Elmfield Training

### *FE Week Exclusive*

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

Elmfield Training, who have been scrutinised by the BIS Select Committee for their delivery of apprenticeships with Morrisons, are starting to make redundancies.

A spokesperson for Elmfield Training told *FE Week*: "In respect of the staff consultation, part of running a business is to make sure there are the right people in the right geographical areas to meet customers' needs and this consultation is part of this process."

"Having gained new customers re-

cently, as well as continuing to work with existing ones, we expect to be able to redeploy the majority of staff who might be affected and where this is not possible we will make every effort to help them get alternative jobs."

"The current changes taking place affect a relatively small proportion of our workforce."

The spokesperson did not disclose how many redundancies are taking place, or if there are more to follow.

*FE Week* approached Elmfield Training about the redundancies following an unpublished comment posted on the *FE Week* website. It reads: "The 'little guys' are already beginning to pay the price as Elmfield started its first round of redundancies this week."

"As a dedicated employee who has been involved in assisting learners to enhance their skills and increase their employability prospects (which is what the company so proudly presents as its goals) we are now faced with being thrown on the scrapheap as a result – hypocrisy in the worst form."

Another comment left on the *FE Week* website, which has not been published, claims that assessors are being pressured into accrediting Morrisons apprentices prematurely.

When asked about the claims a spokesperson for Elmfield Training said: "This has been a highly successful contract with great outcomes for learners."

"Our stringent governance and

quality control arrangements mean that our work is very carefully monitored, with all of our staff working within a strict code of conduct and any deviation away from this is taken very seriously."

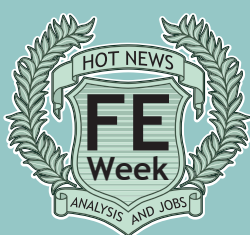
The CEO of Elmfield Training, Ged Syddal, was accused by an MP of a "rip off" during an evidence session held by the BIS Select Committee for their inquiry into apprenticeships.

It follows pre-tax profits of £12.3 million for the company in 2009/10, which Mr Syddal has confirmed "was all government money".

The provider was also scrutinised during the BBC One Panorama programme, "The Great Apprentice Scandal."



WEEKEND



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## FE Weekend: Where Next for Apprenticeships?

Friday 13th July **TO** Saturday 14th July

**AT** Morley College, London **See pages 10 & 11 for more!**





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M: 0783 7769 411



Learning & Skills Events,  
Consultancy and Training Ltd  
161-165 Greenwich High Road  
London SE10 8JA  
T: 020 8123 4778  
E: [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk)

# Funding rates 'realigned'

**Nick Summers**  
**@SummersNicholas**

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has realigned the funding rates used in the Employer Responsive (ER) Other funding stream, matching the funding rates currently paid for Adult Learner Responsive (ALR) delivery.

More than 750 learning aims have been changed in-year, significantly increasing the amount of funding which providers will receive for delivering qualifications.

The changes, which are effective immediately, will also back pay providers for the previous nine months in the 2011/12 academic year.

A spreadsheet published by the SFA shows that the funding attributed to each qualification have all risen, with some, such as the Diploma in Roof Slating and Tiling, increasing by as much as 781 per cent.

The SFA has not revealed the overall cost of the change, but told **FE Week**: "We have modelled the impact of these changes and this was taken to the Funding External Technical Advisory Group."

Many private training providers used to be only funded on the basis they would be delivering qualifications in the workplace.

The training was thought to take more teaching time than if it was delivered in a classroom, and was therefore funded at a lower rate.

However, the introduction of the single Adult Skills Budget (ASB) has enabled providers to deliver classroom provision, creating an anomaly in funding rates.

The SFA website reads: "The consequence of this has been to highlight differences between the funding rates in Adult Learner Responsive (ALR) and Employer Responsive

(ER) Other provision, due to the different drivers used to set rates historically.

"This will not be an issue in the longer term.

"Under our testing of a new streamlined and simplified funding methodology, to be introduced from 2013/14, the aim is that there is a single funding rate for every learning aim regardless of the mode of delivery."

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has welcomed the change in ER Other funding rates, as well as the SFA's plans to equalise the funding of all stand-alone workplace and classroom based qualifications in 2013/14.

Paul Warner, director of employment and skills for the AELP, told **FE Week**: "The good news about the ER alignment is that it aligns the variances where the variances are most marked, as opposed to aligning merely the most popular qualifications.

"By upping the rate where the differences are marked, the SFA appear to be equalising rates fairly and encouraging a broader range of qualification delivery."

He added: "We don't see why any provider should lose from this if they are performing well. However, as the funding for alignment will come from claw back money, we hope that this move will not adversely impact on the ability of good providers to grow under the new system."

Training providers which will benefit from the changes include Building Crafts College, who expect to receive at least an extra £100,000 throughout 2011/12.

Philip Wildman, director of corporate affairs for Building Crafts College, told **FE Week**: "Do we welcome it? Absolutely. These increases have actually, from our perspective, restored the values available to us under the previous regime."

## FE Week news in brief

### Final BIS session

The BIS Select Committee have announced details of their final evidence session on Apprenticeships.

On the 16 May at 9.50am John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning will join Gila Sacks, Deputy Director of the Apprenticeships Unit (BIS/DfE), will give their evidence.

The session will be streamed live on Parliament TV and is open to the public on a first come, first served basis.

### Support for reforms

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) have said that while plans for a pre-16 national funding formula are to be delayed until 2014/13, simpler local funding systems are needed now for "pupils and students with high level support needs, including those up to age 25 in the FE sector."

The EFA's third e-bulletin was published on the May 10 and states that: "Over the next few months, local authorities will need to start putting in place arrangements for simplifying their formulae and supporting FE and independent post-16 providers to deliver the reforms."

Operational guidance to support local authorities in this process has been issued."

### FE Week correction

In last week's article 'Colleges call for FE loans to be delayed' we attributed a quote to the director of planning and funding at MidKent College.

This was an error and the article should have said the quote was provided by the director of planning and funding at Salford City College. As requested, we are happy to set the record straight.

# 'Stop wasting money' Unison tells colleges

**Nick Summers**  
**@SummersNicholas**

Colleges spent at least £65 million on agency staff during the last financial year, according to information obtained by Unison.

The trade union has calculated a combined bill of £64,613,485 for 170 colleges through freedom of information requests.

The disclosure, which details spending between August 2010 and July 2011, follows plans for potential redundancies at a number of FE colleges across the country, as revealed in **FE Week** last month.

Unison say using agency workers is "a disgraceful waste of money", and colleges should be using their resources to either protect jobs or improve wages.

Jon Richards, head of education at Unison, said: "Colleges are claiming that they cannot afford to relieve the pressure on workers and their families by giving them a pay rise.

"These staff will be rightly shocked that colleges have tens of millions to spend on agency workers and on VAT bills."

Mr Richards added: "It is time for colleges to stop wasting money and manage their budgets so they can pay workers fairly and safeguard

jobs."

Leeds City College, who spent a total of £2,777,628 on agency workers in 2010/11, came out highest in the information gathered by Unison.

However, the college told **FE Week** it is common practice to employ external contractors and consultants.

A statement from the college reads: "It is imperative for the college to be able to fulfil its key function of teaching and learning – and due to a number of factors (for example maternity cover, staff absences as a result of illness), there may be the requirement for the use of highly specialised academic or business support personnel for short specific periods of time and/or projects."

It later adds: "While Leeds City College appears at the top of the table, it is important to look at these figures in context.

"Leeds City College is the third largest FE college in the country and any additional temporary spend is likely to be numerically greater than that of most other colleges.

"In 2010/11, the College had an annual turnover of £80 million, with more than 45,000 students over multiple sites.

"College agency spend highlighted is the equivalent of 3.4% of total turnover."

Rotherham College of Arts and Technology, which spent £2,214,529 on agency workers in 2010/11, has also defended the practice and says it helps them to quickly respond to learner needs.

Gill Alton, principal and chief executive of the college, told **FE Week**: "We use agency staffing as a part of our overall staffing mix.

"It enables us to respond flexibly to changes in student demand but also funding changes, of which there are a lot in further education at the moment."

Unison say agencies regularly charge "as much as three times" what they would for a permanent member of staff, and also have to pay 20 per cent VAT on agency bills.

Evan Williams, director of employment and professional services at the Association of Colleges said: "Colleges, which are independent organisations, are aware of the financial benefits and implications of employing agency staff, but it is not always easy to fill these specialist positions often leaving the institutions with few alternatives. It is up to colleges to best channel resources to account for these conditions and they are always looking to be prudent.

"It is a more complicated issue that requires an all-round approach to maintain quality provision."



# 'Disappointing' drop in adult participation

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

The number of adults taking part in formal learning has fallen five percentage points, a survey by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) has revealed.

The annual adult participation in learning survey, published by the independent charity last week, shows that the majority of adults (62 per cent) have not participated in any formal study in the last three years.

The research also shows that more than a third of adults haven't taken part in any learning since they left compulsory education.

David Hughes, chief executive of NIACE, said: "Participating in learning can help people secure work, stay and flourish in their jobs, keep healthy and play a positive role in their community.

"All of those are even more important now with a tough labour market, an ageing population and stressed communities.

"So it is disappointing that participation in

learning is declining, with many of the people who could most benefit missing out."

Roughly one in five adults who responded to the survey said they are currently learning, while 38 per cent said they had participated in the last three years.

NIACE say this is a drop of five percentage points since 2010.

A Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) spokesperson said: "Adult learning has great benefits for individuals, their families and their communities as well for the economy and growth.

"That is why despite declining budgets we have protected investment for priority groups including the low skilled, young adults without intermediate and advanced qualifications and the unemployed."

Toni Pearce, vice president (FE) at the National Union of Students (NUS), told *FE Week* the figures were "very worrying" and likely to decline further once the government's FE loans scheme is introduced.

"It would be a national tragedy if those who have been shut out of education in the past,

and who are increasingly unlikely to be offered the right opportunities to re-enter, were even further deterred from taking up life-changing routes to lifelong learning by the creation of new financial barriers to education and skills" she said.

"Ministers now need to urgently take the initiative and create a lifelong learning climate to replace the one-chance-and-you're-out approach which casts those with huge potential onto the scrapheap and threatens to do permanent damage by offering no route back."

The research, which surveyed 5,237 adults aged 17 and over, also provides a comparative snapshot in participation rates between adults in work, looking for work and retirement. More than 40 per cent of respondents in full and part time employment said they had participated in some kind of learning in the last three years, compared to only 14 per cent of retired people.

The survey also shows that adults who stayed on in initial education are much more likely to participate in learning than those who left at the earliest opportunity.

Mr Hughes said: "Our survey shows that you

are much less likely to take part in learning if you are retired, or outside of the labour market, if you are in a low skilled job, or if you didn't do well in school.

"What's needed now is for policy-makers, providers, businesses, unions and charities to work together to encourage more people to take up learning."

The Association of Colleges (AoC) say it is difficult for providers to maintain the participation levels of adult learners when budgets are being cut and "student entitlements are being eroded."

Joy Mercer, director of policy at the AoC, said: "It is a testament to the commitment of providers that there has not been a more substantial decline in the number of adult enrolments.

"Having said that, if colleges are going to be part of the solution to high levels of unemployment then there needs to be positive encouragement. Those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds should be helped as much as possible to engage with education, to retrain, or to upgrade their skills."

## City College Norwich develops federation model

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

City College Norwich (CCN) is developing a federation model alongside two academies and a potential University Technical College (UTC), which will help share essential services and promote collaboration.

Dick Palmer, principal of CCN, says their proposals include a shared services company which will be in charge of purchasing "basically everything other than teaching and learning."

"Our shared services will be quite unusual," Mr Palmer told *FE Week*.

"It will be providing services to both FE colleges and schools, but we're also looking at possibly the fullest range of shared services I think that anyone is looking at.

"So we're looking at advice and guidance, PR, marketing, library services, as well as the normal things like HR, finance, IT and premises."

The college was given £900,000 last year through a Skills Funding Agency Collaboration and Shared Services grant to help setup the federation. The partnership, which consists of CCN, City Academy Norwich and Wayland Academy in Watton, aims to help all of the providers be more efficient when purchasing services, including impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG).

"Schools are expected to get impartial advice and guidance and we know that's quite difficult for many schools to do that," Mr Palmer said.

"We already provide an impartial IAG service from within the college, not just to ourselves but to other people around the region, and we know it can help deliver that in our federation schools as well." He added: "Creating a better, wider, more supported and more informed learner experience is undoubtedly part of the ambition



for the project."

David Brunton, principal of City Academy Norwich, says the federation could also include up to seven more providers, including a UTC which CCN hopes will be approved later this month.

Mr Brunton said: "We're hoping that something in the region of ten organisations will form part of the federation so we can maximise our purchasing power. In the current climate of individual academies, there is a danger of isolation and therefore another key element of the federation is to setup formal, collaborative structures focused on the development of high quality teaching and learning."

The federation will launch in September and be fully operational by January 2013.

Mr Brunton said: "We will own the service company and they will be part of our federation, so we will have direct input and be able to hold them to account for their performance.

"That closeness of the relationship gives all partners within the federation a sense of ownership, and it's not only about having the service available, it's about having high quality and value for money."

He added: "We think, with the spending power that we have, we will be able to make sure that we deliver the highest level of service."



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FE Week investigates

# The future of adult learning

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

Ever-rising levels of unemployment, lack of skills among sections of the population, equality, changing policy and funding rates are just some of the issues that those in further education need to battle on a daily basis.

But how do they move forward? The potential answers were discussed at The Future of Adult Learning, organised by the Westminster Employment Forum, last Tuesday.

Deborah Roseveare, head of the skills beyond school division in the directorate for education at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), said there are three reasons why adult learning matters.

She said: "First, it contributes to human capital development, both economic and social. Secondly, the changing skills demand, especially over the 40 years of working life.

"Thirdly, demographics mean if you want to boost the human capital and you want to meet changing skills demands, then you have to look at adult learning, because the university cohort adds such a little fraction to the labour force each year."

Mrs Roseveare also told delegates the OECD is currently carrying out a survey to assess skills held by adults, which will be available in October.

She said: "One of the challenges that we have is that we don't know what skills adults actually have and the good news is we are currently carrying out a major international survey of adult foundation skills.

"This is looking at literacy, numeracy and problem solving and a lot of information about background and how they are using their skills if they are in the workplace."

Mrs Roseveare said adult learning should not be looked at "in isolation", adding: "Adult learning needs to be linked to other economic and social policies.

"We are, in a few weeks, going to be releasing the OECD skills strategy, which looks at the evidence and sets out a framework for developing better policies for skills development and utilisation."

David Hughes, the chief executive of the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), spoke of the opportunities and challenges for adult learning.

"I'm not wholly optimistic about the way things are going at the moment.

"Therefore, opportunities are difficult to focus on and actually I think challenges are what we should be focusing on," he said.

He began with six "areas of context", such as the economic crisis, which Mr Hughes believes is also a social crisis.

The second point, he added, is government uncertainty, "about understanding what they are about and what they stand for".

His third point revolved around "fewer adults" learning, while the threat to widening participation, caused by declining numbers, funding cuts and reductions in the unit of funding for learning, was his fourth point.

He added: "The fifth is a shift, particularly around level 3, from state funding to state financing, so we are moving into a world where we are asking people to take loans at level 3 which has never happened before.

"We should be worrying about the impact of that."

His final point related to the government's localism agenda.

Moving on, Mr Hughes then spoke of key challenges, including the "need to promote adult learning in terms of its wider benefits" and inequality.

He also added: "I think there is going to be a social wave of concern around social inequalities in our society. We've got to get in there and show just how unequal so much of the adult learning sector is in terms of the sorts of people who participate."

Mr Hughes also stressed "all forms of adult learning are equally important" and the best employers "really do understand that learning is an important skill".

However, he also suggested that the sector needs to "rehabilitate the word 'learning'".

He said: "We've focused too much on skills, too much on training and too much on teaching, rather than learning.

**"I'm not wholly optimistic about the way things are going at the moment"**

"It's positive to us in this room but if you go to many people out there, they don't think learning is a positive. If you think about people taking their driving tests, they are proud if they do it in as fewer lessons as possible, as the learning is not what they want, it's the passing."

Meanwhile, Tom Wilson, director of unionlearn, the learning and skills organisation of the TUC, said: "From a trade union perspective, we are quite optimistic."

He also said: "Through unionlearn, we have around 230,000 people every year going through some form of learning."

Mr Wilson spoke of a recent trip to Germany with skills minister John Hayes.

"There isn't that same distinction between personal, informal and what counts as company learning. There is encouragement for all sorts of learning and a recognition that the two blend into each other," said Mr Wilson.

The director also said it is the union's view that, in order to get "any kind of job" in Britain today, you need "at least" a level 2.

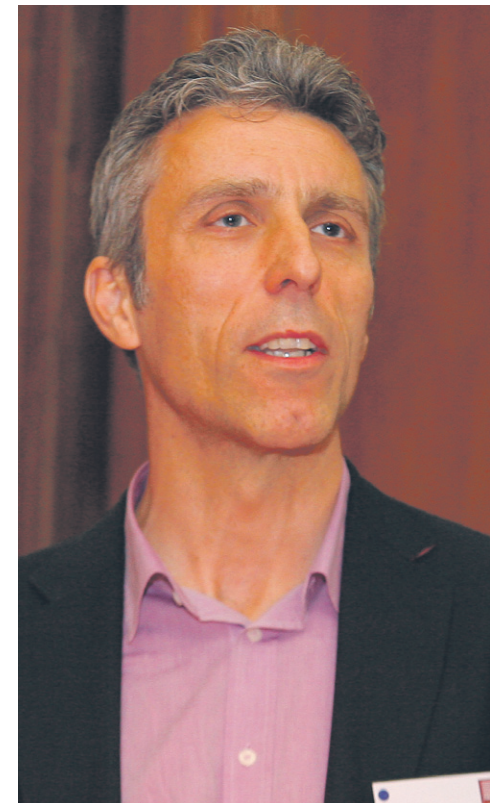
He said: "Most of the young unemployed are people who can't get a job, because they can't get a level 2. If you think about all sorts of jobs, retail, working construction sites, social care, restaurants, hotels, they require



Deborah Roseveare, head of Skills Beyond School Division, Directorate for Education, OECD



Tom Wilson, director, UnionLearn, TUC



David Hughes, chief executive, NIACE

basic levels of skills, which they didn't used to."

Mr Wilson later said: "It's not the squeezed middle, it's the excluded bottom.

"The two or three million out there, of any age, who can't get in the workplace or easily engaged and we have to reach out to them and the way to do that is informal learning."

Other discussions continued with talks from representatives of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, Working Links, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, National Numeracy, UNISON and Rolls Royce.

Meanwhile, president-elect for Association of Colleges, Maggie Galliers, gave an insight as principal of Leicester College into adult apprenticeships.

But it was a question from the floor, sur-

rounding the "disappearance" of ESOL, which caught the eye.

Mr Hughes said: "It's a question we keep asking ministers.

"It's gone quiet, I think really simply for political reasons and that mixture between ESOL being about people coming in to this country and that whole paranoia, right-wing paranoia, about immigration.

"They just want to put it to bed. What they've done is said nothing about it and hope it goes away as an issue.

"We should be promoting ESOL as a positive part of creating a society that we want to live in. That's the kind of positive that we want to turn it around to and I think the government and ministers don't want to talk about it.

"So keep asking and keep prodding them."



## FE Week profile

## Gordon Birtwistle MP ~ his story

Janet Murray

@jan\_murray

The MP for Burnley and chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Apprenticeships talks to *FE Week*

Growing up in rural Lancashire, the young Gordon Birtwistle wanted to be a joiner and undertaker. But while he liked the idea of making coffins, he wasn't quite so keen on the idea of working with dead bodies. "That was the job in those days; make the coffins, bury the people or burn them," he recalls, grimly.

When he left his secondary modern school at 15 (having failed the 11 plus examination "miserably"), Birtwistle did apply, unsuccessfully, to be an apprentice joiner and coffin-maker.

He ended up with a job at a textile machinery manufacturers in Accrington, and by the time he was 21, was a qualified jig and draughtsman, with two higher national certificates under his belt and no regrets about not making it as an undertaker.

But it was tough going. The Liberal Democrat MP for Burnley recalls: "I worked in the skill workshop, as a mechanic and in the machine shop repairing the machines. I worked with the 'mill rats,' men who moved heavy machines around the plant, and I worked in the foundry with molten metal. I did everything."

And on top of a 46-hour working week, including Saturdays, Birtwistle also went to college three nights-a-week and spent most of his weekends studying.

But life was hard for everyone in Lancashire back then, he says.

His parents grew their own vegetables and bred chickens and rabbits to feed the family and Thursday night was "always mashed potatoes because that's all we had left." His mother couldn't afford to buy anything else until his dad - a wood pattern maker - came home on Friday with his wages.

After ten years working in engineering, including a stint as a sales rep, selling machine tools, Birtwistle decided to set up his own engineering company.

He became a local councillor in the early eighties and Burnley Council leader in 2006, but despite having three attempts at winning a parliamentary seat, he never seriously thought he would become an MP.

In fact, he jokes, he only made a third attempt - in the 2010 general election - because he was the only candidate that could afford to buy the leaflets.

Much to his own surprise - and his colleagues in the Liberal Democrat party - he won, by a majority of almost 2,000. But becoming an MP, at the age of 66, came as a big shock to Birtwistle, who had just retired.

"I had a load of mates at the allotment, I was

growing veg, I'd won a prize for my tomatoes, I was taking the grandchildren to school...it was great fun. And all of a sudden I was back in it," he says.

But becoming an MP in a former Labour stronghold (the seat had been held by the party for 77 years) brought challenges. Having run the election campaign from a room over the top of a funeral parlour, Birtwistle realised he needed an office and some staff - and he needed them fast.

Within the space of a couple of weeks, he had acquired, decorated and furnished an office, recruited a team of staff for both Burnley and Westminster and been appointed parliamentary undersecretary to the chief secretary to the treasury, Danny Alexander - quite a lot to take in for a man who "had only been to London about seven times in my life."

While he still doesn't like London, Birtwistle has settled into his new role. And earlier this year, he became chair of a new All Party Parliamentary Group dedicated to apprenticeships.

Launched by the awarding organisations EAL and IMI, the group will focus on the changing needs of employers and apprentices across the engineering, manufacturing, building and automotive sectors.

"We have to up our exports, we have to get rid of our balance of payments deficit; once we have done that, growth will fly," he says. "But growth won't fly unless we have people to ensure we do it.

"When I started work, manufacturing was at least 40 per cent, maybe 45 per cent, of GDP. We didn't have balance of payment problems in those days, even though we didn't have much money.

"But in the last 30 years, manufacturing has been allowed to decline and previous governments have banked everything on the service sector and the city. The city catches a cold and we all catch pneumonia."

In Burnley, where the majority of jobs come from manufacturing, many companies have permanent vacancies because they can't recruit enough skilled workers, he says.

Burnley's biggest company has an average age profile of 45, and there are too few people coming up behind them.

**"It's all very well getting these results, but when the young people can't get a job afterwards, that's defeating the object"**

"I think it is completely tragic when we have young people who can't get jobs, so let's kill two birds with one stone and train young people to do the jobs of the future, so that the companies



that we have, that are prospering, will have the staff in the future."

But "Mickey Mouse apprenticeships are no good," he says, by which he means short apprenticeships, particularly in the retail and service sector, some of which can be completed in as little as 12 weeks.

"We have got to have proper apprenticeships where people do proper training for a period of time until they are skilled at their job. My apprenticeship took five years.

I wasn't qualified and I didn't get full pay, until I had served my time. I accept now, with modern technology, they [young people] don't need to do five years, but they certainly need to do three years."

The reason some young people are not considering apprenticeships, is because their perceptions - particularly of manufacturing - are outdated, he says.

"It's not the Terry Webster type engineering that you see on Coronation Street with dirty overalls on and an oily rag in his top pocket. That's not engineering any more - it's high-tech manufacturing."

But if attitudes are to change, young people must have access to good quality independent advice and guidance - something that has been lacking in schools for the past 25 years, says Birtwistle. "Secondary schools should be more involved with careers than they are at the

moment.

"I think they are more concerned with meeting targets, five A\*-C including maths and English, and they have taken their eye off the ball on what they do once they have left. It's all very well getting these results, but when the young people can't get a job afterwards, that's defeating the object."

Birtwistle is amongst those Liberal Democrat MPs who voted for a rise in university tuition fees. And he is keen to point out that he did challenge Vince Cable on the detail of the policy, including how the new tuition fee structure would affect students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

But he is unrepentant about his decision, saying the increase was necessary to help get the country out of economic trouble.

"Danny Alexander's predecessor left a little note saying, 'There's no money left. Good luck.' Now, I've been brought up that if you've got no money, you don't spend it."

If he could achieve one thing during his time as an MP, it would be to see manufacturing up to a minimum of 20 per cent of the UK's GDP, he says.

"If we get it to that, then apprenticeships will follow, there won't be as many young people out of work, the balance of payments will be almost resolved and we will have massive growth in the economy."



## FE Week Experts

# Why Adult Learners' Week matters now more than ever



The national awards ceremony for Adult Learners' Week kicks off a week of similar events across the country this week, alongside thousands of opportunities for people to have a go at learning, often for the first time since they left full-time education.

There will be tears and laughter, applause and inspiration at the ceremonies and there will be thousands of people lured and inspired into more learning as a result of the week of events.

We know from our evaluation that people get involved in learning because of the chance to have a go or because they have seen publicity about one of the awards winners and have been inspired. At the same time, though, our annual participation in learning survey sets out how much more we need to do.

Since 1996 we have asked the same questions about participation in learning and can track changes over that period. This year's figures suggest that fewer people are engaged in learning than two years ago, reflecting the public funding pressures as well as the reductions in employer investment in learning at work.

Overall around one in five adults have participated in learning in the last year and around two in five in the last three years.

The headline figures mask the most important issue though. Participation in learning and the associated benefits are spread very unequally across our society.

Whether you cut the numbers by age, socio-economic class, employment status or prior educational attainment you will find some

big inequalities. This is why we must retain a strong widening participation agenda in policy, funding and practice to make sure that the inequalities are addressed.

Our Policy Conference this year as part of Adult Learners' Week is about widening participation; we think it is one of the most important issues we should be discussing and acting on. There has been much progress in the recent past that we do not want to lose and there is so much more to do before we have a true learning society.

Inspiring people through our awards ceremonies and have a go events is not going to be enough; we need learning providers to do the outreach, engagement and delivery which meets the needs and motivations of different groups of people in different settings and we need policy and funding to recognise that reaching out does cost more and needs support.

That is why we are working with The Open University on this issue. They have done more than any other organisation to broaden Higher Education to hundreds of thousands of people who otherwise would not have attended university. The conference will hear from other organisations who are vital in achieving wider participation.

**“Participation in learning and the associated benefits are spread very unequally across our society.”**

The WEA will be talking about how the opportunities on people's doorsteps can revitalise communities. We will be hearing from Hammerson's about the progress made for people learning in the workplace, particularly for those in low-paid jobs and for those that are perceived to be unskilled.

Finally, but perhaps most crucially for the future BT will be giving us a glimpse into what the future possibilities are for technology to open up access to millions of adults – as the internet, for instance, has done.

Adult Learners' Week has always been about reaching out and engaging, inspiring and motivating; and for people's careers, for their families, their health and the communities they live in, we need more of that during these tough times.

David Hughes,  
Chief Executive, NIACE

# The end for Britain's 'conveyor belt' of skills

The Government's announcement to lengthen the duration of apprenticeships will help to ensure better quality workers which is vital for the economy's growth.

The recent announcement by the Skills Minister John Hayes that apprenticeship schemes are to be lengthened is welcome news for the British economy. It signals the end to what could be seen as a 'conveyor belt' approach to vocational training, where 'any skills' have taken precedent over the 'right skills'.

For too long, some industries have been damaging the apprenticeship brand by pumping out apprenticeships, focused primarily on volume and speed rather than the end product. In the midst of quota madness, quality, skill and the type of training that the industry needs to thrive risked being compromised.

The construction industry is an ageing sector, with a significant number due to retire in the next ten years. The retirees will be highly skilled, highly experienced workers, and their replacements will have to be trained accordingly to fill their boots.

Couple this with major changes on the horizon which will warrant a raft of new skills in the areas around nuclear build, green energies and Building Information Modelling. Thanks to Government investment there is also a number of major infrastructure projects in the pipeline such as High Speed 2 and Crossrail. To meet the skills demands that are coming a highly skilled future workforce is simply a must.

In the construction sector, apprenticeships are one of the most important entry points into a career in the sector. For years, the industry has relied heavily on this cohort of new blood coming through ready to pick up the gauntlet. However, despite their importance, we have recently seen an increase in the number of providers who have tried to fast track candidates, badging short-term duration courses as apprenticeships.

Short-term courses in their own right are a great way to up-skill and continue on the professional development path, but the problem arises when some try to shoe horn courses into shorter time frames than can really do them justice.

This is potentially harmful to the apprentices that complete them, employers and the industry as a whole if they are not delivering the right skills for growth. Investment in apprenticeships is an investment in the future of the industry itself and it is self-defeating to support courses that are unfit for purpose, as it damages the industry's ability to compete on a global scale in the long-term.

As a result, we need to ensure we are safeguarding the skills needs of the industry for when the market picks up. At CITB-ConstructionSkills,



we are committed to continuing to raise standards for apprenticeships, and believe the training infrastructure should be largely shaped by employers to help produce high-quality results.

This is why we have rejected claims for qualifications for courses as short as 18 months, and for framework completions for level 2 apprentices achieved between 12 and 17 months. We don't believe short apprenticeships will support the industry's needs now or in the future.

What we will continue to support and provide, however, are robust and fit-for-purpose apprenticeships that really do deliver, and our level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships meet those standards. Most level 2 frameworks in construction are achieved between 18 and 30 months – with level 3 frameworks being awarded 12 months after the completion of a level 2 framework.

We will also make sure that flexible finance packages are available to help employers afford them. Last year alone, CITB-ConstructionSkills provided over £49m in apprenticeship grants to 10,000 employers, and helped more than 63,000 people to achieve vocational qualifications.

Apprenticeships are crucial to producing the construction workers of the future. The recent commitment from the Government will go some way toward ensuring the apprenticeship system works well for us all. We must always remember that it is the quality of our future workforce, not the quantity, that will drive growth.

For further information on CITB-ConstructionSkills Apprenticeships, visit [www.cskills.org/apprenticeships](http://www.cskills.org/apprenticeships).

Mark Farrar,  
Chief Executive of CITB-ConstructionSkills



## FE Week Experts

## Achieving excellence in teaching and learning



Recommendations in the latest report from the Commons education select committee offer an opportunity for a parallel, if not unified, approach to raising standards of teaching and learning throughout our schools and colleges. It is an opportunity that must not be wasted.

The select committee's report, 'Great teachers: attracting, training and retaining the best', calls for a new 'college of teaching', along the lines of the royal colleges and chartered institutions in other professions. It also recommends a thorough review of teacher training to ensure all staff have high-quality continuing professional development (CPD).

The further education and skills sector already has such a body in the Institute for Learning (IfL), and our experiences very much echo the findings of the committee. Moreover, our surveys on the effectiveness of CPD in colleges and

providers over the past three years show how much effective CPD can be delivered through collaborative professional learning activities, created and led by teachers themselves and backed by IfL (or a similar college of teaching).

As well as working, this kind of CPD can be efficient and cost-effective. Teachers do need protected time to share and learn together, and the research evidence shows that this is wise investment.

When the committee searched for training models for schools, it looked – as such committees usually do – beyond the field of education. But there are models of excellence closer to home in the FE and skills sector that should be explored with a view to greater cooperation, collaboration and sharing.

There are political and strategic imperatives too, given the importance of 14 to 16-year-olds and 16 to 18-year-olds increasingly learning across schools and colleges, and in academies and studio schools sponsored and housed within FE colleges.

Since April 1 2012, college lecturers with the professional status of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) are entitled to teach in schools, giving those institutions an additional source of vocational and wider pedagogic skills, and opening up greater scope for schools and colleges to share the teaching of programmes for young people.

This supports a significant political theme for the government since it accepted all the recom-

mendations in the Wolf review. The quality and accessibility of vocational education and training for young people is a massive opportunity, which, surprisingly, this select committee report did not touch on.

IfL has contributed to the development, so that teachers in FE are valued in our sector and in schools, and to the CPD of teachers in FE. Last year, IfL supported over 18,000 teachers' and trainers' CPD.

With others in the sector, IfL successfully campaigned for teachers and trainers with QTLS to be recognised as qualified teachers in schools as well as further education, for individuals to have status and career flexibility, and to enable colleges to develop more strategic partnerships with joint teaching in schools.

The further education sector itself is currently subject to a detailed review of professionalism, chaired by Lord Lingfield. IfL questions the recommendation in its interim report that initial teacher training should not be required by government policy but should be optional.

And we believe the thrust of the select committee report is about raising the bar so that having qualified teachers is the minimum, with no suggestion whatsoever that teachers being qualified is above a baseline minimum for schools and young people taught there.

We trust that the Lingfield review will consider closely the content of the select committee's report before publishing its full report this summer.

The interim report was written in a climate of the coalition government calling for deregulation and, as such, it called for IfL to become an independent, voluntary and professional, rather than statutory, membership body for teachers and trainers.

Whatever shape we take, we have confidence in our future and the thousands of teachers and trainers who have chosen and will continue to choose to engage with IfL as their independent professional body.

But this article is not about banging the FE drum or any special pleading for particular organisations. It is about recognising the common educational landscape where schools, colleges, private training providers and indeed universities need to work together to achieve excellence, which starts with good teacher training and CPD.

Read together, the Lingfield review and select committee report suggest deep-seated contradictions in emerging government policies for schools and post-compulsory education and training.

Nevertheless, more positively, they do show the urgent need for very similar supportive structures, for a membership association for teachers, and for a strong emphasis on CPD throughout schools, FE and probably higher education, which needs careful consideration – and considered actions.

*Toni Fazaeli,  
Chief Executive, Institute for Learning (IfL)*

## SFA don't do planning, and neither can you



When Skills Funding Agency (SFA) replaced the Learning and Skills Council in April 2010 the main difference in function was a very public end to central planning.

This was accelerated by the coalition government when in June 2010 they scrapped the Summary Statement of Activity (a national template for provider plans) and introduced a 'free and flexible' single Adult Skills Budget.

Yet, take a forensic look at how the SFA have been managing the £4bn budget, and you would be forgiven for thinking they did not

want anyone else to stick to a plan either.

- In August colleges are unexpectedly told that despite policy announcements the previous November to the contrary, many unemployed learners on 'wider benefits' might remain eligible for full funding after all.

- In November colleges unexpectedly start being offered millions by the SFA to be spent on NEEtTs before the end of the academic year. With no explanation as to how this would be recorded nor monitored, the SFA simply told *FE Week*: "The funding forms part of the existing Adult Skills Budget that is being redeployed as part of our normal quarterly performance review."

- In March colleges are unexpectedly given a share of £23 million in Discretionary Learner Support funding, to be spent before August. One principal told *FE Week*: "Getting that sort of sum of money, in an unplanned way late in the year, just isn't doing anybody any favour."

- In April *FE Week* analysis of an SFA document shows that overall in-year allocations have increased a staggering £240 million since August. Newham College, for example, has

received an in-year increase of more than £4 million.

- In May the SFA unexpectedly announce they are adjusting 797 qualification funding rates with just three months of the year remaining. All 797 went up, some by more than 400 per cent. (See page 2).

So it seems colleges and training providers are getting almost monthly calls from their friendly SFA account manager. If so, does the Agency say something like:

"Forget the reduced funding rates and cut to your allocation while you were planning your courses, or that you made redundancies to find efficiencies. Now that your courses have started can you help us out? We have a couple of hundred million in unspent funding to offload. Sound good?"

It may sound good, but how can providers be expected to sensibly plan the resources to deliver high quality courses with all these short-term 'unexpected' giveaways?

One claim from the SFA is these in-year increases reward success, and providers don't earn the funding unless the courses are actu-

ally delivered. But this is not true. When funding went unspent last year the SFA said: "A tolerance of three per cent will be applied to the final out turn for 2010/11, so clawback will be waived for providers who have delivered 97 per cent or more."

The other problem is that without an enforceable plan, colleges and providers can and do decide to use the funding for courses that the Skills Funding Agency do not want to purchase. For example, it is clear that 25+ apprenticeships starts continue to grow exponentially whilst the high priority 16-24 year-old starts have stalled. So despite the end to central planning, when allocating funding for next year the SFA said that they don't want "maintenance of current recruitment levels for those aged over 25" and "will monitor the pattern and volume of 25+ Apprenticeship delivery in-year". Case of the SFA wanting to have one's cake and eat it too?

Few support the principle of central control or giving money back to the Treasury, but Agitator sees a sector increasingly struggling to see the point of doing their own business planning much beyond lunch, let alone for the next academic year.



# FE Week gets technical

The Skills Funding Agency last week published “Updated 2011/12 Allocation/Maximum Contract Value Data - April 2012” These two pages compare these current allocations with the August 2011 version. Source: <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/>

## Skills Funding Agency first and current 2011/12 allocations

SFA Allocation	First 11/12 allocation	Current 11/12 allocation	Increase	
Adult Skills Budget	£2,441,138,450	£2,604,934,311	£163,795,861	7%
16-18 Apprenticeships	£754,330,841	£808,368,198	£54,037,357	7%
Adult Safeguarded Learning	£209,999,996	£209,999,996	£0	0%
Formal First Steps	£37,491,708	£37,500,000	£8,292	0%
Additional Learning Support	£113,241,996	£124,257,023	£11,015,027	10%
Discretionary Learning Support	£100,568,513	£100,969,682	£401,169	0%
Joint Investment Programme	£4,449,569	£4,494,448	£44,879	1%
European Social Fund	£148,442,401	£153,157,141	£4,714,740	3%
Employer Simplification Pilot	£0	£7,350,607	£7,350,607	n/a
<b>Total SFA allocation</b>	<b>£3,809,663,474</b>	<b>£4,051,024,114</b>	<b>£241,360,640</b>	<b>6%</b>

## Top five college in-year 2011/12 allocation increases

### 16-18 apprenticeships

FE College	First 11/12 allocation	Current 11/12 allocation	Increases	
South Nottingham College	£2,017,598	£4,103,186	£2,085,588	103%
Stourbridge College	£2,568,228	£4,451,697	£1,883,469	73%
Sussex Coast College Hastings	£439,343	£2,276,928	£1,837,585	418%
North Hertfordshire College	£1,754,454	£3,354,454	£1,600,000	91%
The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London	£895,675	£1,985,039	£1,089,364	122%

### Adult Skills Budget

FE College	First 11/12 allocation	Current 11/12 allocation	Increases	
Barnsley College	£3,673,419	£6,322,267	£2,648,848	72%
City and Islington College	£14,118,297	£16,346,105	£2,227,808	16%
South Nottingham College	£19,087,111	£21,303,586	£2,216,475	12%
Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College	£18,649,939	£20,709,695	£2,059,756	11%
Newcastle College	£37,164,188	£39,148,674	£1,984,486	5%

## Top five college in-year 2011/12 allocation decreases

### 16-18 apprenticeships

FE College	First 11/12 allocation	Current 11/12 allocation	Decreases	
Newcastle College	£9,455,279	£6,836,294	-£2,618,985	-28%
Chesterfield College	£5,425,357	£2,836,865	-£2,588,492	-48%
Sparsholt College Hampshire	£2,340,000	£764,920	-£1,575,080	-67%
West Nottinghamshire College	£7,916,193	£7,027,155	-£889,038	-11%
Solihull College	£1,958,007	£1,161,459	-£796,548	-41%

### Adult Skills Budget

FE College	First 11/12 allocation	Current 11/12 allocation	Decreases	
Warwickshire College	£8,455,853	£7,500,000	-£955,853	-11%
Stoke on Trent College	£15,619,845	£14,896,279	-£723,566	-5%
South Staffordshire College	£8,541,616	£7,977,666	-£563,950	-7%
Kirklees College	£10,699,655	£10,200,000	-£499,655	-5%
Richard Adult Community College	£4,039,747	£3,635,772	-£403,975	-10%



## Skills Funding Agency in-year reductions and increases to 2011/12 allocations

SFA Allocation	Allocation reductions	Allocation increases	Net difference
Adult Skills Budget	-£58,175,472	£221,971,333	£163,795,861
16-18 Apprenticeships	-£67,385,646	£121,423,003	£54,037,357
Adult Safeguarded Learning	£0	£0	£0
Formal First Steps	£0	£8,292	£8,292
Additional Learning Support	-£162,982	£11,178,009	£11,015,027
Discretionary Learning Support	-£236,915	£638,084	£401,169
Joint Investment Programme	-£130,338	£175,217	£44,879
ESF	-£21,933,605	£26,648,344	£4,714,740
Employer Simplification Pilot	£0	£7,350,607	£7,350,607
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£113,849,554</b>	<b>£355,202,897</b>	<b>£241,353,343</b>

## Largest five private training provider in-year 2011/12 allocation **increases**

### 16-18 Apprenticeships

Private Training Provider	First 11/12 allocation	Current 11/12 allocation	Increases	
JHP Group Limited	£13,075,177	£16,981,177	£3,906,000	30%
Retail Motor Industry Training	£4,294,577	£7,670,312	£3,375,735	79%
The Alternative Hotel Group	£3,626,452	£6,980,179	£3,353,727	92%
Charnwood Training Consultants Ltd	£355,876	£3,445,093	£3,089,217	868%
Lifeskills Solutions Ltd	£380,891	£2,485,795	£2,104,904	553%

### Adult Skills Budget

Private Training Provider	First 11/12 allocation	Current 11/12 allocation	Increases	
UFI Ltd	£121,215,789	£129,416,697	£8,200,908	7%
HIT Training Ltd	£9,423,827	£17,234,227	£7,810,400	83%
Elmfield Training Ltd	£25,350,000	£31,101,000	£5,751,000	23%
General Physics Ltd	£6,660,820	£11,233,675	£4,572,855	69%
Charnwood Training Consultants Ltd	£1,801,827	£5,550,331	£3,748,504	208%

## Largest five private training provider in-year 2011/12 allocation **decreases**

### 16-18 Apprenticeships

Private Training Provider	First 11/12 allocation	Current 11/12 allocation	Decreases	
ESG Intermediate Holdings Limited	£9,252,761	£5,319,160	-£3,933,601	-43%
Elmfield Training Ltd	£12,000,000	£10,000,000	-£2,000,000	-17%
City and Guilds for Business Limited	£3,000,000	£1,062,825	-£1,937,175	-65%
Construction Learning World Ltd	£5,807,449	£3,943,925	-£1,863,524	-32%
Zenos Ltd	£45,511,805	£43,767,537	-£1,744,268	-4%

### Adult Skills Budget

Private Training Provider	First 11/12 allocation	Current 11/12 allocation	Decreases	
First4Skills	£17,202,486	£13,406,674	-£3,795,812	-22%
Construction Learning World Ltd	£16,628,593	£13,159,458	-£3,469,135	-21%
CITB Construction Skills	£18,974,917	£15,589,601	-£3,385,316	-18%
BT	£11,543,553	£9,195,825	-£2,347,728	-20%
Van Hee Transport Limited	£2,206,041	£0	-£2,206,041	-100%



# FE Weekend: Where Next for Apprenticeships?

Friday 13th July **TO** Saturday 14th July  
**AT** Morley College, London

## **FE Week proudly presents FE Weekend**

FE Weekend is an inaugural summer conference organised by FE Week, which will provide an opportunity for attendees, from across the sector and at all levels, to receive business critical updates on policy developments and to discuss future changes to further education.

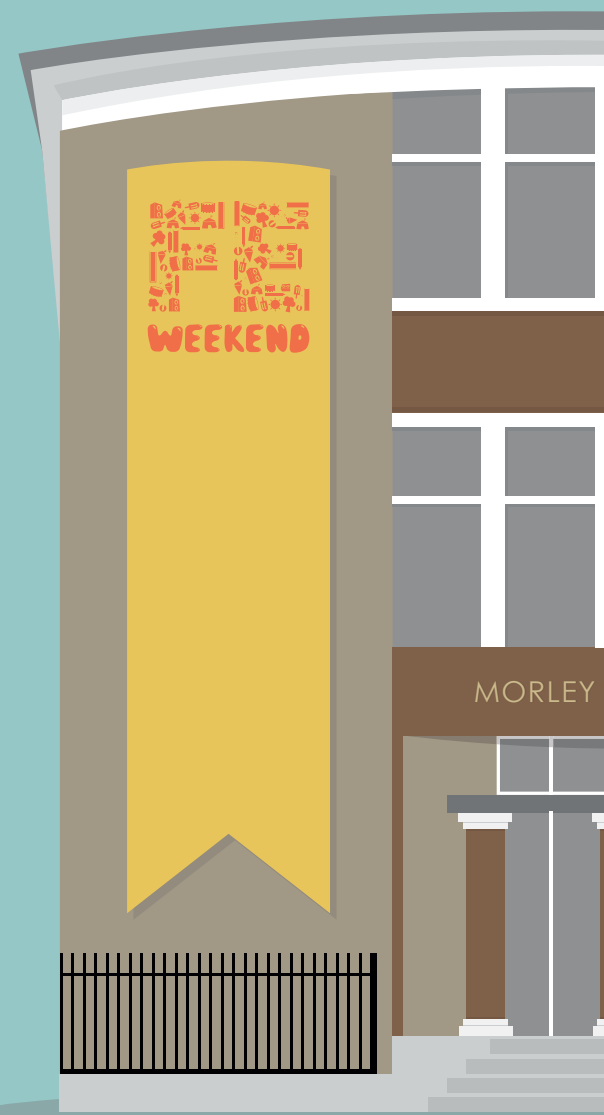
This year's FE Weekend is focussed on apprenticeships and called: **Where next for apprenticeships?**

Friday 13th July is aimed at Senior Managers of Colleges, Sector Skills Councils, Government Agencies, Awarding Bodies and other related organisations. Price for attendance is £195 + VAT

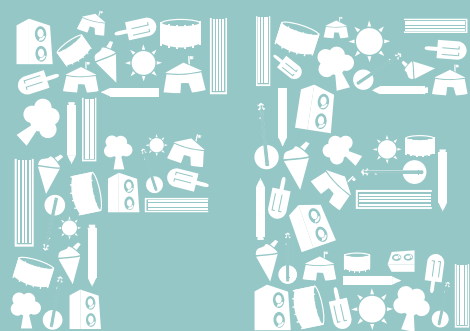
Saturday is FREE TO ATTEND and aimed at curriculum staff, trainers, assessors and middle and senior managers in colleges, training providers, awarding bodies, sector skills councils, government agencies and other related organisations.

You can register online at [www.feweekend.co.uk](http://www.feweekend.co.uk) to attend just the Friday, just the Saturday (which is free) or for the Friday and the Saturday.

The agenda will be updated during the run up to FE Weekend as new speakers, workshops and plenaries are confirmed. The programme is also subject to change.







WEEKEND



[www.feweekend.co.uk](http://www.feweekend.co.uk)

Workshops delivered by:

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# FE Week campus round-up

## Writtle College event gives food for thought



Writtle College are preparing to play host to an innovative event to help children gain knowledge about the journey of their food from field to fork and raise awareness of the countryside around them.

The Essex Schools Food and Farming Day will be staged on May 24, with 3,000 primary schoolchildren and 500 teachers and assistants from all over Essex attending.

The aim is to get children out of the

classroom and give them a better understanding of the food chain and the role played by farmers in Essex, as well as raising awareness of countryside and environmental issues. Guy Smith, Essex farmer and chairman of the event steering group, added: "It is particularly rewarding that we get such a brilliant response from the schools. As farmers we are very proud that non-farmers take such an interest in what we do and want to know more."

## Warwickshire College floristry tutors create blooming marvellous display for festival



A beautiful floral display has been created at Coventry Cathedral by tutors and students from Warwickshire College.

As part of the cathedral's Flower Festival, floristry tutor Jane Benefield and ten students from the college's Moreton Morrell centre decorated four of the altar candlesticks - which are nine feet tall - with their display designed around the four seasons.

Many of the elements of the design, such as lichens and pine cones, have been gathered

from the college grounds.

Jane said: "We've been working on the designs since before Christmas so we're looking forward to showing our display in such a beautiful building."

"This will be a really valuable experience for the students to be part of this major floristry event. The students have been involved in the design, planning and creation of the arrangements and we can't wait to get started."



## Will City College Southampton pair cut the mustard?

A duo of skillful stylists are set to showcase their skills on the national stage.

Claire Heenan and Charlotte Moss, both students at City College Southampton, have made it through to the finals of the National Student Barber Competition 2012.

The pair, aged 18 and 30, will attend the national awards ceremony in London on May 14, where photographs of their work will be judged amongst the best in the country.

They will then find out if they have come out tops in the national competition.

Claire said: "I'm proud of getting through to the finals; it has been such a confidence boost. This opportunity is giving me exposure to competitions which is a great for my career."

Charlotte added: "I'm amazed that I got through. It will be a great new experience. I entered a competition previously, but didn't get through. Making the finals has rebuilt my confidence."

## CHENEL student wins chance to work at the Olympic Salon



Charlene Stoute, a hairdressing student at the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, has won a once in a lifetime opportunity, beating off stiff competition to work at the Olympic salon during the 2012 Games.

A competition, launched by Podium - the Further and Higher Education Unit for the 2012 Games - and London 2012 partner Procter & Gamble, appealed for eight Health and Beauty students to take on paid employment working as a Salon Junior in the Olympic Park during the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Charlene won one of the highly sought after roles after writing a submission that explained why she wanted to be a Salon Junior at the Games.

She said: "Since starting out in hairdressing, I've always visualised working with celebrities and the best stylists, and now that dream has come true. I'm totally overwhelmed with this opportunity and want to thank all my tutors and the College for providing this opportunity."



## Doncaster College student is leagues ahead

A life skills student at Doncaster College has returned from the European Down Syndrome Open Swimming Championships with a stack of medals.

Ben Sweeney is quite used to winning competitions around the world and has more than 800 hundred medals in his bedroom, so he has a dilemma of where to put his tally of eight Golds and one Silver from two days of competition at the Quays in Southampton.

Ben, who recently turned 19, clocked up two world records at the event.

He became the fastest in the world in the 100 metres breaststroke and the 50 metres backstroke.

Ben has been swimming since he was three-years-old and although he prefers the backstroke, he will turn his arm to the breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle events.

Ben is in his last year at college and wants to work with children as a coach but he wants to carry on swimming as well.

He said: "I just want to get better and better and make my family proud."



## Central Sussex College cleans up at awards



Outstanding students from Central Sussex College were recognised by FE Sussex, at a prestigious ceremony to celebrate the 2012 Spring Awards at the Hilton Brighton Metropole.

The college celebrated a record-breaking four winners and three runners-up - more than any other college in Sussex.

With a winner or runner-up in seven out of twelve categories, students from the Crawley and Haywards Heath campuses took centre stage throughout the evening, which is an

annual celebration of achievement in academic and vocational education and training in Sussex.

As lead college at the event, Central Sussex College students also took part in the running of the evening.

Hospitality students served welcome drinks and the three course meal enjoyed by guests, AS Level Art students worked on sketches and paintings as guests looked-on during the drinks reception and AS Level Music students performed in the interval.



## Blackburn College tells students to belt up

Blackburn College has joined forces with the Council to highlight dangers of not wearing a seatbelt after a shocking new survey revealed 50 per cent of young people in the Borough admitted to not wearing one.

According to a road safety survey, more than half of the young people in Blackburn with Darwen admit to not wearing a seat belt when travelling in the car, with females admitting they wear one occasionally when travelling in the front seat or on a motorway.

As part of the Your Life Your Call initiative, an innovative campaign highlighting the consequences of not wearing a seat belt, Blackburn College students had the opportunity to witness a car that had been in a crash supported by young actors, complete with realistic injuries, who were travelling in the car.

Barry Griffiths, head of learner services at Blackburn College, said: "It's really important we educate our students about the dangers of driving and not wearing a seatbelt."

## Havering College students to host BBC show

Media students at Havering College of Further and Higher Education are to host a BBC Question Time-style politics show after winning a national competition.

The college will be hosting a live webcast debate with politicians and celebrities on June 1. The programme will also be broadcast on the BBC Parliament channel.

The prize is the result of the college's curriculum manager for Media, Andy Popperwell, entering a five minute edited clip of Havering Asks in the BBC's annual Schools Questions and Answers competition.

The Havering Asks event was organised by the college and Havering Council during Local Democracy Week last September and involved a filmed debate with an audience of 150 young people and a panel of politicians and celebrities.



Mr Popperwell said: "This is an excellent achievement for the college. Our students and staff are excited to be working with the BBC on a live broadcast. Young people will be able to question politicians and celebrities on the issues which matter to them. It will be a fantastic insight into the industry for our media students."



## South Cheshire College is STEM assured

South Cheshire College has won a prestigious national standard.

The Crewe College has been awarded the New Engineering Foundation's (NEF) STEM Assured status, which recognises excellence in the quality of scientific, technical mathematical and engineering delivery in education and training.

The standard places a particular emphasis on industry relevance and embedding STEM skills across a range of learning areas.

The award reflects the college's determination to be at the forefront of

the technical and scientific curriculum and desire to meet the needs of local and national employers. The NEF's Dr Sarah Peers, who led the STEM Assured process, said: "This was a strong application showing evidence of good practice embedded at both lecturer and management levels of the college, with follow through in ensuring that provision meets the needs of employers and students."

South Cheshire College is only the fifth college in the country to be awarded STEM Assured status.

## West Thames College students on ITV show



Students from West Thames College were featured in a health item for ITV's award-winning This Morning programme.

The students asked questions to camera as part of a Medical Myth Busting item on health, contraception and sexual awareness.

The filming and questions were led by ITV's Laura Sommerville and Sam Palmano, who praised the students for their professionalism

and confidence throughout the filming session.

Performing Arts student John Roberts (18) said: "The filming experience was fantastic as we got to take direction from two television industry professionals who made it both fun and unique. It's a great thing to have on my CV."

The students' questions will air on May 15 and will be answered in the studio by the show's resident GP, Dr Chris Steele.



## Leyton Sixth Form College hits the slopes

Leyton Sixth Form College had its first ever skiing expedition as students tackled the beautiful Italian Alps for a week of physical exertion and sensational skiing.

Kumba Hutt, English teacher and organiser, said: "None of the students had ever skied before, but within the week all had skilfully mastered the sport and the slopes."

Chris Price, vice-principal, said: "The trip was a fantastic success."

"The college provides many opportunities for student travel and this year our young people have also been on a visit to New York."

"We aim to give students the widest possible opportunities to broaden their horizons."



*FE Week events...*

# FE is ‘very different kettle of fish’

**Nick Summers****@SummersNicholas**

The fast-approaching FE loans policy has been labelled as “very complex to implement”, “difficult to market” and cause for “real worry” from key figures in the sector.

A roundtable debate, held at the *FE Week* office and attended by a representative from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the University and College Union (UCU) and the National Union of Students (NUS), as well as the shadow minister for FE, among others, was used to discuss the sector’s growing concerns with the scheme.

Peter Pledger, chief executive of South London Business and chairman of the Confederation of Apprenticeship Training Agencies (COATA), criticised the government’s timetable for introducing the policy, emphasising that learners would need more time to think about applying for a loan.

“With all due respect, you need to get your act together,” he said.

The Department has revealed to *FE Week* that the new system has been renamed as “24+ Advanced Learning Loans”.

A BIS spokesperson told *FE Week*: “After carrying out testing with a sample of learners, we have chosen the name ‘24+ Advanced Learning Loans’”.

“This describes the loan offer which covers learners aged 24 and above studying at level 3 and above.”

Gordon Marsden, shadow minister for FE, skills and regional growth, emphasised at the roundtable debate that learners in FE are very different to those in HE, and should be treated accordingly by the Student Loans Company (SLC).

Mr Marsden said: “(The) government can say until its blue in the face that it will be done in the same way as HE loans.

“They may want to use the same instrument, the SLC, but it’s a very different kettle of fish, delivering loans across variable courses for variable lengths and at variable times of the year, to doing a sort of one size fits all with HE loans.”

Andrew King, the lead on FE loans at BIS, responded: “We have had to look at how the systems operate in relation to that, and ensure that there are systems in place so that it can be dealt with.”

Toni Pearce, vice president (FE) at the NUS, said the absence of UCAS in the further education sector would be another issue for the SLC.

She said: “For the SLC to only have to interface with UCAS is one thing, but to have to interface with a variety of different providers in the country?”

“We could well be in a situation where students receive a loan and don’t get onto their course, or get onto their course and then don’t receive a loan because those two things have to interface separately.”

The FE loans scheme was first announced as part of the spending review in 2010.



Kate Lomas, lecturer at Greenwich Community College and UCU member and Peter Pledger, chief executive of South London Business and chairman of COATA

A budget was then set to introduce FE loans in 2013/14 (£129 million) and 2014/15 (£398 million), based on the current system used in higher education (HE).

It is understood that learners will make repayments on an income contingent basis, equivalent to nine per cent above the £21,000 threshold.

The Department held a consultation with the sector last summer, and has also published reports detailing the initial impact assessment and equalities screening impact assessment.

**“The priority is to shift money towards young people in an age where we have millions of young people unemployed”**

The final versions of these reports - alongside new market research which examines the potential impact of FE loans on learners - are expected to be published later this month.

Mr Marsden said he was waiting with “baited breath” to see how the research had been carried out.

“I think the whole picture that we’re building up is of concern, concern that people will be nudged away from FE and real, severe difficulties about the implementation period, and relative breakneck speed at

which this is now proceeding,” Mr Marsden said.

“Yes, it was flagged up in 2010, but what has actually happened between 2010 and up to the last six months? The answer is very little.”

Kate Lomas, a lecturer at Greenwich Community College and member of UCU, said she knew teaching staff who were still unaware of the policy, and that it would be very difficult to sell the concept of a loan to learners in their local area.

“Teachers who are involved in enrolment and marketing, who have to promote the college, are going to find it very difficult to market,” she said.

“We’ve spent a lot of time trying to engage adult learners, over 24s, and particularly women in our community, and it’s going to be very difficult to sell that whole notion to them.”

Mr Pledger said he did, however, support the introduction of the FE loans system.

“It’s absolutely the right policy,” Mr Pledger said.

“Will it hurt FE colleges? Yes. Will it hurt adult community colleges? Yes. But that’s not the priority. The priority is to shift money towards young people in an age where we have millions of young people unemployed and that’s where you want to shift money, and we support it.”

Mr Pledger added that the introduction of FE loans would also help create a “truer market” for learners aged 25 and above.

“They will choose the courses that truly will help them make more money,” he said.

The shadow minister for FE responded by saying the government should be worried about the effect the policy will have on the record number of new adult apprentices.

“I think the government should be

concerned that their much flaunted expansion in post -24 apprenticeships could well fall off a cliff if this goes wrong, because you will get droves and droves of people not prepared to take a post 24 apprenticeship loan up on an individual basis,” he said.

Mr Pledger said that while he agreed the number of adult apprentices would drop following the implementation of the loans system, it would also ensure greater value for money and help eradicate ‘deadweight’.

“What I would like is - if we’ve got a limited amount of resource - is that resource is focused at those under 24 without a level two or level three qualification, and if we want people to up skill at a higher level, the employer either pays for it or the individuals get loans on qualifications that truly meet their needs,” Mr Pledger said.

Mr King said the Department had looked “very seriously” at apprenticeships, and argued that many apprentices would be happy to take out a loan once they understood the value of the qualification associated with their programme.

“Once they understand the offer of the loan that’s available to them, that’s when they’re willing and willing to cost taking that out,” Mr King said.

“(They) see the value of the loan offer that’s available, rather than just the increasing debt that it might otherwise be seen as.”

The Department will be using a paper based system with the SLC to manage the loan applications from April next year.

However, Maxine Room said the FE loans system should be deferred a year unless an online system was available instead.

“I’m driving an e-strategy in my college, and it seems incredible that you’re even



thinking about it," the principal of Lewisham College said.

"What will happen in colleges - and the psyche of college is something I know well - is you start with a paper based system, you then go to an online system, but staff keep their paper based system because they're worried about the online system."

Mr King was clear the Department was developing an online system simultaneously, which they hoped to implement at the earliest opportunity.

"It's not that we've made the decision not to have an online system, but obviously (we're doing) as much as we can to accelerate that process and potentially bring it forward," he said.

However, Ms Room said providers would also need time to trial the online system.

"We need to have our information this year, now, and the system up and running so we can trial it," she said.

"We've had issues in our own organisation about trialling some of the system changes, and staff have been very negative when we've put systems in without actually piloting them.

"Now for you to come in and say the system is a paper based one, but you might have an online one, well for me is a no-no."

The new name for FE loans, "24+ Advanced Learning Loans", was also criticised during the roundtable debate.

"Well it could be simpler," Ms Room said.

"It's not a name; it's a descriptor isn't it?"

Mr Marsden added: "I think the name is potentially going to have the unintended consequence of turning quite a lot of people off.

"I'm sure that's not what (BIS') intention is, but I think the psychology hasn't been thought about."

Mr King said the new name was a result of a survey conducted with the sector.

"It wasn't a name we put forward as part of the survey, but it was actually something that was suggested as part of the responses.

"So we gave three responses and people came back with ideas about Advanced Learning Loans, and 24 + Advanced Learning Loans. They felt there should certainly be an age related element to the title and that it should be referenced to the type of learning it was for."



Gordon Marsden, shadow minister for FE, Skills and Regional Growth & Maxine Room, principal, Lewisham College



Gordon Marsden took a look at last week's edition of *FE Week* just before the debate began



Toni Perace, VP for FE, NUS and Andrew King, lead on FE loans at BIS

**Go to  
feweek.co.uk  
for the full video  
of the FE loans  
roundtable  
debate**

For more great video content go to *FE Week's* video page: [www.youtube.com/feweekpodcast](http://www.youtube.com/feweekpodcast)

Rayleigh Magson from Hackney Community College gave a speech





Bradford College is recruiting for two senior management posts. The College has been delivering quality education and training for over 175 years. Each year we deliver hundreds of courses to over 23,000 learners, from across the globe. The College is the fourth largest in the country and the largest provider of higher education outside of the university sector in England.

Both postholders will be a member of the College's Leadership Team. Through membership of the Leadership team, the successful candidates will make a major contribution to the College's strategic planning and strategy implementation, primarily in those areas assigned to the postholder's responsibility. The postholder will also be expected to support all other aspects of College activity.

## Director of Student Services

**£60,514 per annum** Job Ref: 12067

The College has established a very broad curriculum base of further education and higher education, with targeted provision servicing the needs of young people, adults, employment, business and the local community. The importance of ensuring high quality support and direction for students is a major priority.

The postholder is expected to contribute to the College's strategies for building on this base. The appointee will make a significant contribution to the development of the College culture to put students first.

The postholder will have an undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification along with a proven track record of managing Post 16 student/customer services within an educational setting. Previous experience of managing budgets and the ability to communicate with, lead, motivate and encourage individuals and teams is essential. You must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the range of support funds available to students and current legislation relevant to learner services. The postholder will have the ability to develop and implement marketing strategies for student recruitment as well as a demonstrable commitment to deliver equality and diversity. The College provides a comprehensive range of courses to students studying further and higher education so knowledge of both sectors will be essential.

This is a fantastic opportunity for an experienced Senior Manager in all areas of student support to make an impact within a dynamic organisation

If you would like the opportunity to have an informal discussion about the post, please contact **Andy Welsh** on **01274 433011**.

A disclosure check with the Criminal Records Bureau will be undertaken for this post.

Closing date: 12 NOON 6 June 2012

Interviews to be held on 20 and 21 June 2012

## Assistant Principal Adult Skills

**£67,750 per annum** Job Ref: 12068

The successful candidate will take specific responsibility for developing the strategy for adult training and education in the college's vocational and community programme areas. A major part of the role is the performance management of the adult curriculum to continue to maintain and improve on the very high quality as well as building capacity with local partners and through other national initiatives.

The postholder will have an undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification and a teaching qualification along with significant leadership and management experience in Further Education. A high level of understanding relating to current education policy and regulatory and/or inspection frameworks and an extremely developed understanding of effective and efficient curriculum planning and delivery in further education programmes are also essential. The postholder must be able to demonstrate excellent knowledge of funding methodologies, strategies for efficient management of resources and the diversification of income opportunities and have an exceptional track record in the leadership and management of curriculum, teaching and learning, resource planning and delivering excellent success rates.

This is a fantastic opportunity for an experienced Senior Manager/Leader to make a significant impact within a dynamic organisation.

If you would like the opportunity to have an informal discussion about the post, please contact **Kath Oldale** on **01274 433011**.

A disclosure check with the Criminal Records Bureau will be undertaken for this post.

Closing date: 12 NOON 6 June 2012

Interviews to be held on 13 and 14 June 2012

We're committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expect staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Please visit [www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk](http://www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk) to view a full job description and complete an online application form. Alternatively email [recruit@bradfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:recruit@bradfordcollege.ac.uk) stating the Job reference number to obtain an application pack. Please note CVs are not accepted.



## We're recruiting for two vacancies

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The successful applicant must have experience of managing the delivery of apprenticeships and have a good knowledge of apprenticeship and skills policy. You will be proficient in customer responsiveness, demonstrate strong communication, problem solving, team working and project management skills.

You will have experience of encouraging innovation within a team as well as planning changes. Proven ability to manage projects and analyse information & develop innovative solutions. You must be able to demonstrate excellent written and oral communication skills and good problem solving.

### Pre-Employment Programme Manager - Product Development

**£30,000 - £42,000 PA & benefits**

The successful applicant must have experience of delivering or managing the delivery of pre-employment training and have a good knowledge of the skills and welfare system. You will be proficient in customer responsiveness, demonstrate strong communication, problem solving, team working and project management skills.

You will have experience of encouraging innovation within a team as well as planning changes. Proven ability to manage projects and analyse information & develop innovative solutions. You must be able to demonstrate excellent written and oral communication skills and good problem solving.

The roles work closely with key stakeholders; employers, learning providers, industry bodies and People 1st teams. Both roles are full time permanent positions based in Uxbridge with occasional travel across the UK required.

To apply please send your covering letter detailing your suitability for the role, along with your cv to [jobopportunities@people1st.co.uk](mailto:jobopportunities@people1st.co.uk) by **25 May 2012**.

Interview and assessment day scheduled for **6 June 2012** in our Uxbridge head office. A Job Description is available at <http://www.people1st.co.uk/appointments>



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**Closes: 20 May 2012, 11pm. Interviews are likely to be held on: 28/29 May 2012.**

**The position will be available to suit applicants' notice periods, from September 2012.**

For further information and application pack, please visit [www.leadfranklin.co.uk](http://www.leadfranklin.co.uk) or contact our advisers, ASDTi, by email: [gm@asdti.com](mailto:gm@asdti.com), or T: 01457 851407, or write to ASDTi, 46 Hathersage Drive, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 8RG.

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**The Person:** You will encourage and sustain both innovation and a revised focus on commercial and competitive activity. As Principal, you will be uncompromising in the commitment to all learners, and dedicated to the needs and ambitions of stakeholders. You will epitomise the College's influence in external contexts.

**If you believe you can meet this demanding specification then we would be delighted to hear from you.**

Please contact Helen Anderson at [handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk](mailto:handerson@collegeleadership.co.uk) or on 0115 911 1117 for an application pack, or visit [www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current\\_appointments.asp](http://www.collegeleadership.co.uk/current_appointments.asp) for further information about this post.

**The closing date for this post is 12pm on Friday 25th May 2012. Interviews will be held on the 18th and 19th June 2012.**



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We are ambitious. We believe we can and must do more to impact positively on the lives and prosperity of local people. We will look to raise their aspirations and instil them with a new spirit of enterprise. We will also seek to enhance our support to local businesses and key employment and wealth creating sectors, providing the future skills they need to become more competitive.

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This role is vital to support and develop our information and reporting systems, at all levels, to transform ncn into a world class e-learning and e-business organisation.

You will provide outstanding, innovative and customised approaches and solutions to the College's information systems, have detailed knowledge of funding streams and an analytical and resourceful attitude to translate your knowledge into practical support for all teams across the College. You will also be a great team player, committed to strong partnership-working and be our key interface with funding agencies.

For all our senior positions, the ability to lead, inspire, motivate and develop staff will be crucial to our ambitions. As will be the commitment and ability to collaborate effectively with internal and external partners.

Please call Paul Lonsdale, Deputy Principal Resources on 0115 9121659 for an informal discussion in the first instance regarding this exciting opportunity.

The selection assessment date for the post is: Thursday, 31 May 2012.

The closing date for this post is 5pm on Friday, 18 May 2012.



Apply online at [www.ncn.ac.uk](http://www.ncn.ac.uk) or call 0115 911 3662 for an information pack.



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**Closing Date: Friday 18 May 2012**

For online application please visit [www.lmc.ac.uk](http://www.lmc.ac.uk) or [www.fejobs.com](http://www.fejobs.com), or for a job application pack (various formats) phone 01524 521507 / email [jobs@lmc.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@lmc.ac.uk). All posts are subject to a CRB Disclosure in line with our policy of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners.



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If you would like to apply for this post please visit our vacancies section at [www.totton.ac.uk](http://www.totton.ac.uk) and download an application form. Alternatively contact the HR Department on 02380 874874 or email [hr@totton.ac.uk](mailto:hr@totton.ac.uk) for an application pack. Totton College requires all staff to have an enhanced CRB check and a minimum of two references. Totton College is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and mutually supportive working environment for all. We value the diversity of our staff and students.



Closing date for this post is: 18th May 2012



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We would like to hear from you if you share our vision and values and think you can help us to achieve our ambitions. Applicants should have a thorough understanding of the skills and employability context and be able to demonstrate a successful recent management level background in a related organisation. This is an excellent opportunity for career development in further education and training and for aspiring Principals.

**Closing date: Friday 18 May 2012 (by noon).**  
**Interviews are scheduled for: 29 May 2012.**

**For an informal discussion please contact Wayne Wright, Deputy Principal on 01323 637296.**

**For further details please visit our website, or phone our recruitment line on 01323 637613 (direct line), 01323 637598 (24 hour), Minicom 01323 637216 or e-mail [EastbourneHR@sussexdowns.ac.uk](mailto:EastbourneHR@sussexdowns.ac.uk)**

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Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate successful management of this curriculum area, leading to outstanding levels of learner success.

**Closing date: 12 Noon Thursday 24 May 2012**

For an application pack please email [recruitment@iwcollege.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@iwcollege.ac.uk) or call the 24-hour recruitment line on 01983 535209.  
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# Farewell, you won't be forgotten



As I write these words, I'm hurtling through the countryside on a train heading back to Peterborough, having left *FE Week* for the final time after possibly the busiest and most exciting eight months of my five-year working life.

So why leave? Well, the aforementioned location for writing this piece, as well as the small digitals shining '9.25pm' in the bottom corner of my laptop screen, give you an insight into the decision.

But as the cliché goes, and I love a good cliché, sometimes you get an opportunity you can't let pass you by - and it is this situation I have found

myself in these past few weeks. But is it goodbye to FE forever? I honestly hope not. These eight months opened my eyes to a vibrant, exciting, and somewhat misunderstood sector.

There is so much good going on in FE and it's a pleasure to say since the very first edition of *FE Week* in September of last year, I have been near the forefront of some of its biggest successes.

It was in those first few days that I first heard of what of was to be my favourite part of working at *FE Week*; WorldSkills London 2011, which took place just two months later in November.

Over four days, the ExCel was my home - reporting live and filing copy from this huge international event. It allowed me to meet many famous faces, from fine dining with Eddy the Eagle, to a very brief "Q&A" with Boris Johnson (well, one question).

But, the more lasting memory is that it also allowed me to see exactly what FE is all about; thousands of students and teachers showcasing their skills, surrounded by proud parents, friends and supporters. And how great was it to see Team UK come away with a record showing?

The same month also saw another major highlight of my time at *FE Week*, which was the Association of Colleges' Annual Conference and Exhibition in Birmingham.

Three days of policy and debate - not only busy schedule-wise, but also a steep learning curve for me - still only new in the sector at the time.

I doubt I'll help move a whole newspaper office, computers and all, to set up camp in a hotel for a half-a-week to cover an event ever again!

The conference also introduced me to the sociable side of FE at the *FE Week* charity auction. Not only was it a really fun night, but to be part of something that raised so much money for a worthy cause, the Helena Kennedy Foundation, is something that will stay with me for a long time.

So, what about the future and *FE Week*? Well, a new education journalist will arrive next week

and she will be a valuable addition to the team. In fact, it may even be easier with one less Nick in the office!

Joking aside, *FE Week* has grown significantly since launching eight months ago - to be honest, probably more than I expected prior to my arrival! Its impact on the FE sector is clear for all to see and plans for the future are progressing very well.

**"You have all contributed to what has been a thoroughly enjoyable part of my career"**

It has a hugely talented team, especially on the editorial side with Nick Summers and Dan Duke, and great background staff. It goes without saying that I wish them well for the future.

I think that's everything, other than to say that it has been a pleasure to work with every one of you. You have all contributed to what has been a thoroughly enjoyable part of my career. Thank you and good luck!

*Nick Reinis, former deputy editor of FE Week*

## FE Week Sudoku challenge

1					7			9
		2	4	1				
		7	8		9	3	4	
7		6		8		5	3	
	8		1		2		6	
	4	3		6		9		8
	7	5	2		1	6		
				9	8	2		
3			5					4

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

	8		1	4				
2			3					
		6		8			3	
6		1				8		
5	4						9	1
		3				6		4
	5			9		1		
					2			9
				6	4		8	

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## Last Week's solutions

4	6	2	9	7	8	5	1	3
7	8	1	4	3	5	9	2	6
3	9	5	2	6	1	7	4	8
8	3	6	5	9	2	4	7	1
1	5	7	8	4	6	2	3	9
2	4	9	7	1	3	8	6	5
9	2	3	6	8	4	1	5	7
6	7	4	1	5	9	3	8	2
5	1	8	3	2	7	6	9	4

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

8	4	3	2	1	5	7	6	9
2	5	1	7	9	6	8	3	4
6	9	7	3	8	4	5	2	1
3	8	6	9	2	7	4	1	5
5	1	2	4	3	8	9	7	6
9	7	4	6	5	1	3	8	2
4	3	9	8	6	2	1	5	7
7	6	5	1	4	3	2	9	8
1	2	8	5	7	9	6	4	3

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



**"Mostly this week I have been driving the barrel bug ride at the Eastern Farm Park in Suffolk"**

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford